

A photograph of ancient stone ruins, possibly Mayan or Aztec, with large, gnarled tree roots growing over them. The roots are thick and brown, contrasting with the weathered, greyish-brown stone. The scene is set against a backdrop of a cloudy sky.

Ancient Timeless Shores

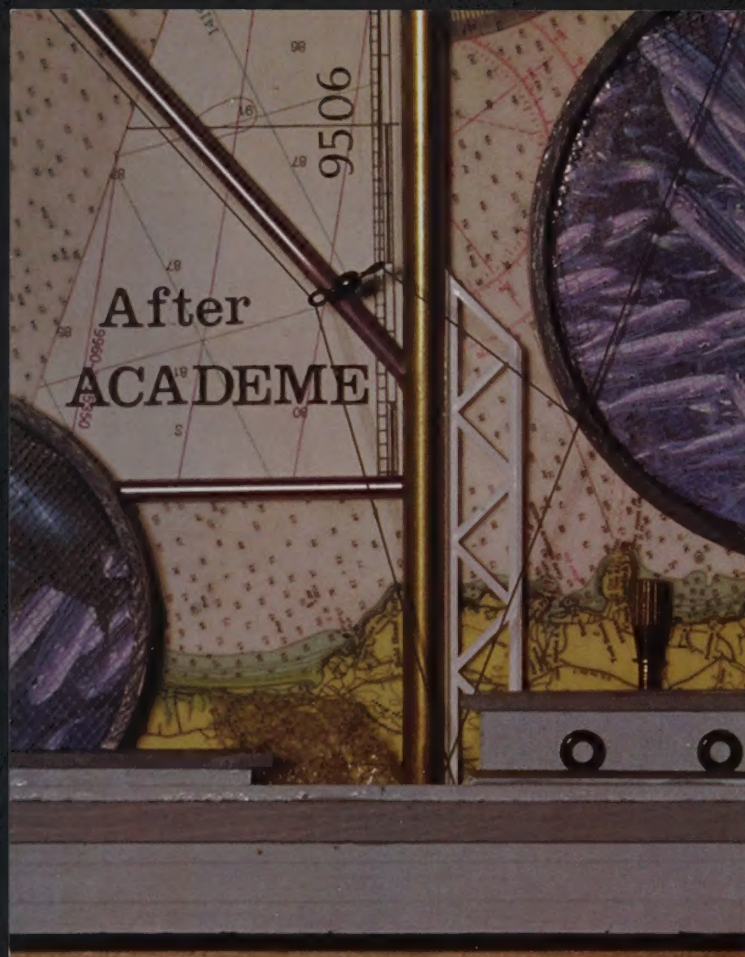
Lawrence Sykes



259 Atwells Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island
USA
www.galleryzprov.com

Front Cover: *Visages de Bouddha*
3.75 x 10.75", 2009

Back Cover: *Lair of the Angel of Progress*
10.5 x 10.5", 2008



Lawrence Sykes:

A Petite Retrospective of 7 Suites

Show Dates: March 7- April 8, 2006

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 16th, 5-9pm.

Sykes: *After Academe*, 95-05





Celebrating our 5th year!

Gallery Director - Bérge Ara Zobian

259 Atwells Avenue
(next to Scialo Bakery)
Providence, RI 02903
(401)454-8844
www.galleryzprov.com

Gallery Hours:
Tues. & Wed. 12-6
Thurs. - Sat. 12-8
or by appointment

Lawrence Sykes: A Petite Retrospective of 7 Suites
Show Dates: March 7- April 8, 2006
Opening Reception: Thursday, March 16th, 5-9pm.

MEMBER: Gallery Night Providence
PWCVB and the Federal Hill Commerce Association

The Gallery Z Private Collection features work by
artists from the early 20th century to the present.
We are a tax free zone now.



Ancient Timeless Shores:
Photo-Constructives by
Lawrence Sykes

All artwork copyright 2009 by Lawrence Sykes.

Book Copyright 2009 by Gallery Z Inc.

ISBN 978-0-9840692-0-0
259 Atwells Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
USA

www.galleryzprov.com

Editing and Research by Derek Mearns

Photography and Layout by Chris Murphy

The Blurb-provided layout designs and graphic elements are copyright Blurb Inc., 2009. This book was created using the Blurb creative publishing service. The book author retains sole copyright to his or her contributions to this book.



Ancient Timeless Shores:

Photo-Constructives by Lawrence Sykes

This book is dedicated to Barbara Joanne Sykes, wife of Lawrence Sykes for over fifty years; a strong woman and a patient human soul who has journeyed with Larry from the driftwood of rivers in Africa, to repose from Academia, to his continuous creative endeavors.

... And to the Master; Larry Sykes

Ah, to think back a quick forty years into my own origins in the photographic arts... a return from duty in South East Asia, a painter, a photo-phile and guitar strummer... me a young upstart, hungry in life and hungry for knowledge and still searching for a meter by which to measure up and grow. Enter the poet warrior, conjurer of deep dreams, a true shaman of the Jungian collective subconscious, a real historian of real people ... enter then the young the amazing, Professor, Lawrence “Larry” Sykes. Towering above me, in height and intellect, he walked circles around me, truly, and challenged me, with a smile, and those intense glaring eyes, to “...confront my own contradictions.”

He was a person who could raise reason from the dust on a window pane and consider it as possible imagery for the lens... before a classroom of eager young (and sometimes not so young) minds, the *Sykian Method* was bombastic, entertaining and poignant... filled with mystery, energy and beaming with truth; what a mind. His students could lean forward on his every word... his assignments were opened ended, his critiques could be endless and his internal struggle between chaos and order, the real fuel for the creative, could erupt right before your eyes and take on the dimensions of atmospheric turbulence. I had found what I had sought after, a mentor...In the form of a life long friend and brother.

In my recall, it took but moments for Sykes and I to bond as kin, artists on a campaign into the future, humbled by the past, and weary of the present... Sykes knew more about Rome than most Romans and had more eclectic connections in his synapses and syntax than most minds could manage. He spoke in code, multiple metaphors, levels of consciousness’ with personalized tempo and nod; rap before rap, an exhaustive and delicious collection of all his travels, sense of history and joy of being alive, for the moment. Oh, how I could write the book on Larry Sykes.

His most recent works, seen here, are proof of a lifetime of inquiry and observation, all held together with the playful mischief of a creative young mind. Reach into these works if you will; see beyond the materials, and the forms and subject matter... find the world inside a dream... from the mind of the master, Larry Sykes.

-Angelo Marinosci, Jr.

Art Critic, Photographer

2009

Impressions from a Museum Curator

My first assignment as curator at the Newport Art Museum in 1998 was organizing an exhibition called “Curator’s Choice,” from the permanent collection. *Senufo Portrait*, a photo construction and collage by Lawrence Sykes, which the Museum had acquired from the show “Directions” in 1991, intrigued me from the beginning. I followed up with the artist, and the result was “Sykes at 70,” a retrospective which attempted to place the work of several decades in a context and chronology.

While Sykes’ bent toward intellectualism and search for artistic truths took him on physical journeys through the African Diaspora and theoretical forays into the world of art making, it was inevitable that the artist would turn from straight documentary photography to what he called “post-visual” constructions. Sykes says that influences as varied as Stations of the Cross, Northern European altarpieces and pop-up books led to three-dimensionality in his photographs.

Shadows, so evocative in photography, add both a spiritual and formal presence to his constructions. I have long admired Larry Sykes’ commitment to his art, art education and the African-American experience, and his success at exploring and interpreting the universal theme of the “family of man.”

-Nancy Whipple Grinnell, Curator

Newport Art Museum
Newport, Rhode Island
2001

Master poet – Michael S. Harper, Professor at Brown University and Rhode Island’s first Poet Laureate, asserts: “History is your own heart beat”.

WOW.

Could that suggest, that a chronological cinematic review of our heartbeats could be a fascinating exposé of our Odyssey? We could study our trails, voyages, routes and roads not taken, encounters, crises and revelations. Visual artists with their natural propensity for visualizing, leave a plethora of marks and clues on their Odessic paths. The late great painter, Phillip Guston remarked, “What is seen and called the picture is what remains – an evidence.”

So out of this brief accelerated meander I suggest;

- A. Listen to your heartbeat.
- B. Check your evidence.

Perhaps your Odyssey will lead to bliss.

—Lawrence Sykes

Sometimes a journey through the woods is not propelled by what you find, but rather by what finds you.



Found in 100 Acre Wood, 7.5 x 9.5", 2007



Early Fall, 10 x 12.25", 2008





South of Mumbai, 16 x 9.5", 2008



Summer House on the Nile, 13 x 8.5", 2008



Passage, 7 x 10.25", 2008





Some linear devices are used as a directive to alter our perception of an image. In this case the ropes tie the piece together both figuratively and literally.



Wharf, 8.25 x 5.75", 2008

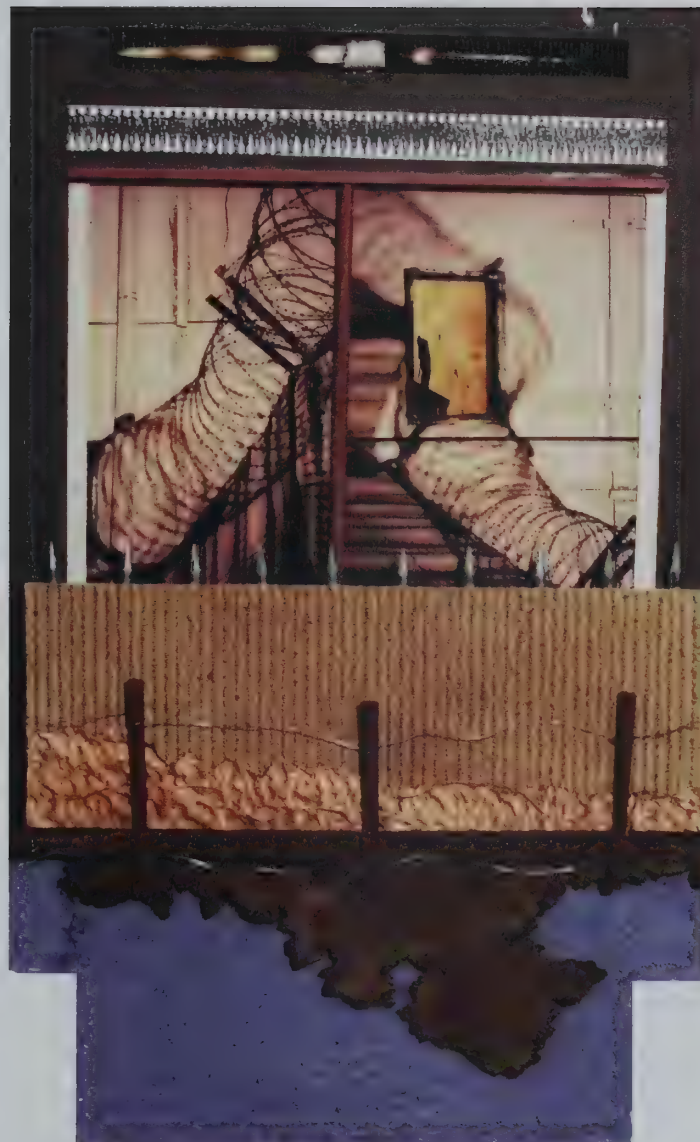


Mandela Suite

As a member of the African National Congress in 1944, Nelson Mandela was engaged in a resistance against the ruling National Party's apartheid policies in South Africa. After the ANC was banned in 1960, Mandela campaigned to set up a military wing within the organization to oppose the National Party. In 1963, Mandela and eight other ANC leaders were brought to stand trial for plotting to overthrow the government by violent means. In June 1964, Mandela and the other ANC leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Mandela's refusal to compromise his political stance made him a popular leader and a powerful symbol of resistance among South Africa's oppressed black majority and growing anti-apartheid movement.

In February 1990, Mandela was released from prison and the ANC was reinstated one year later. Mandela was elected president of the ANC in 1991; in South Africa's first multiracial elections in 1994, he was elected President of South Africa.



Mandela Suite: Razor Wire Blues, 9.25 x 14.5", 2008



Mandela Suite: Our Man for All Seasons, 32.5 x 25", 2008



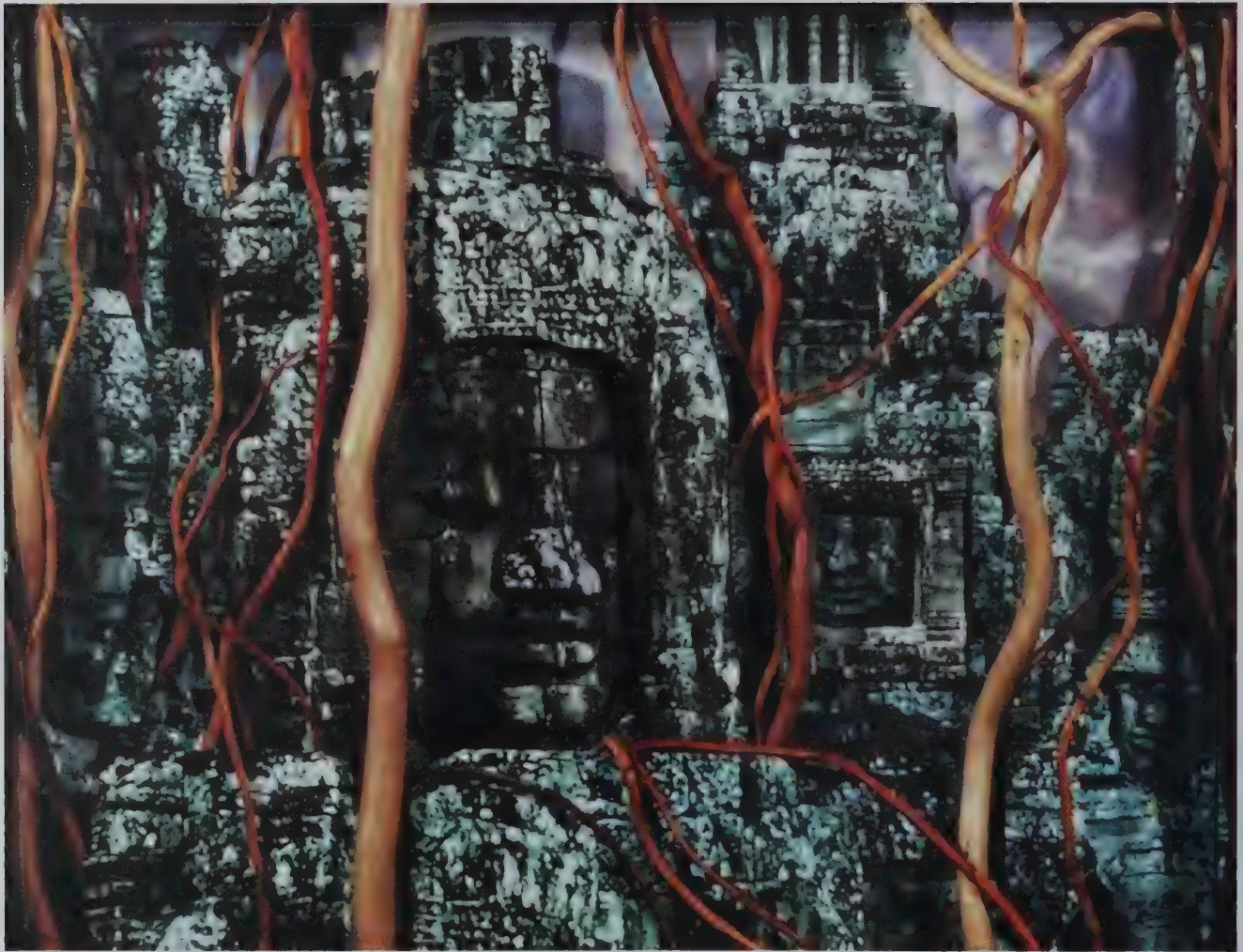
Mandela Suite: Robben Island Blues, 9 x 13.25", 2008



Asmara A.M., 4 x 6", 2006



Full Moon in Agra, 10.5 x 6", 2008



The history of Angkor Wat, Cambodia is immortalized by its monumental ancient temples. These roots are now reclaiming the site and providing evidence that history and time cannot be stopped.



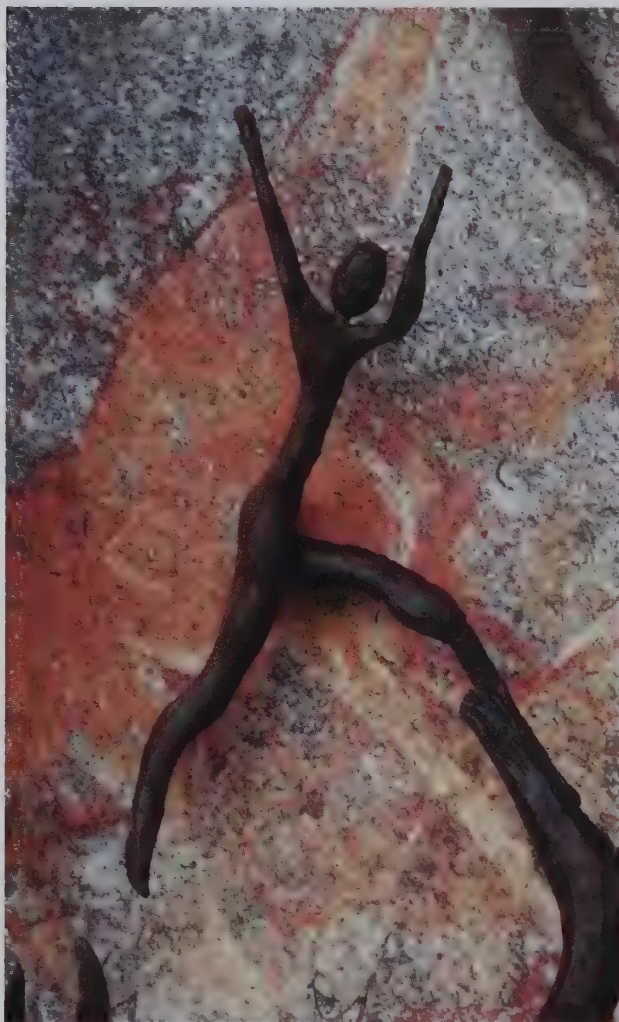
While these strong sculptural forms have remained unchanged over time in India, the spirituality and continuous cycles associated with the Ganges River provides a contrast of energy and a living history of the ancient landscape known as Benares.

In every case, from the work he began doing in the 70's to his most recent images, Sykes has pursued the wonder of human culture, ritual, and spiritual expression in their broadest contexts.

—John Pantalone, Art New England, Dec./Jan. 2002



In Old Napoli
4.75 x 15.25", 2008



Detail: *Lift Off*, 4.75 x 20", 2008



Lift Off





"His face is turned towards the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress."

—Walter Benjamin, in
Illuminations

writing about the
Angel of History



“Our Odysseys on space ship earth carry us to far places – by foot, flight, float, or thought.”

These words of Lawrence Sykes refer to how we as individuals take inventory of our personal journeys, one heartbeat at a time; how the evidence of our routes can be found in the clues and marks we leave behind.



Mesa of the Phoenix, 28.5 x 36", 2009



Outer Limits, 32.25 x 40.5", 2009

Perhaps if Icarus could have utilized the flying apparatus envisioned by Da Vinci, a flight closer to the sun would have been possible.



Here we find him patrolling the skies over the African continent,
a NATO ally keeping watch for Somali pirates.



Tuscan Window, 7.25 x 7.25", 2007

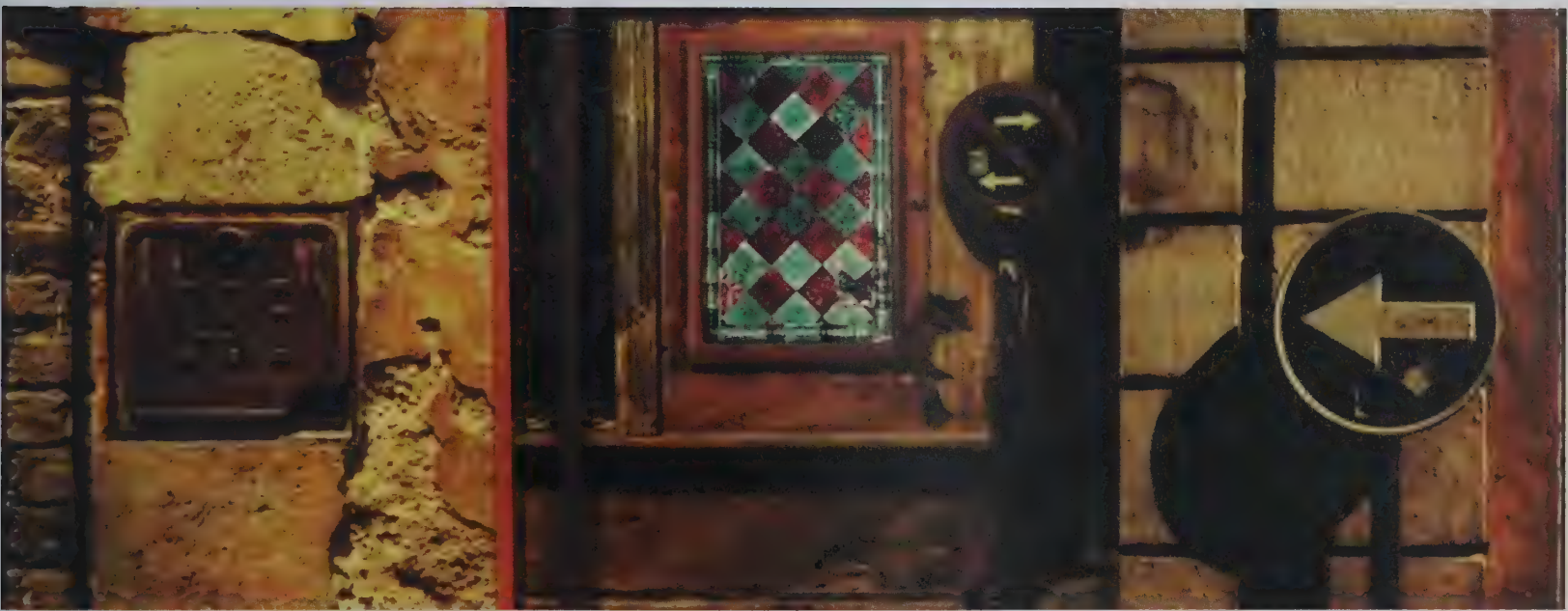


Provence Geometry, 9 x 4.75", 2008



Berlin Rising, 5.5 x 7.25", 2005





Corner in Seville, 16.5 x 6.25", 2005-09



Dada Techno Will Hoodoo You, Mixed Media Sculpture, 11 x 11 x 17", 2009



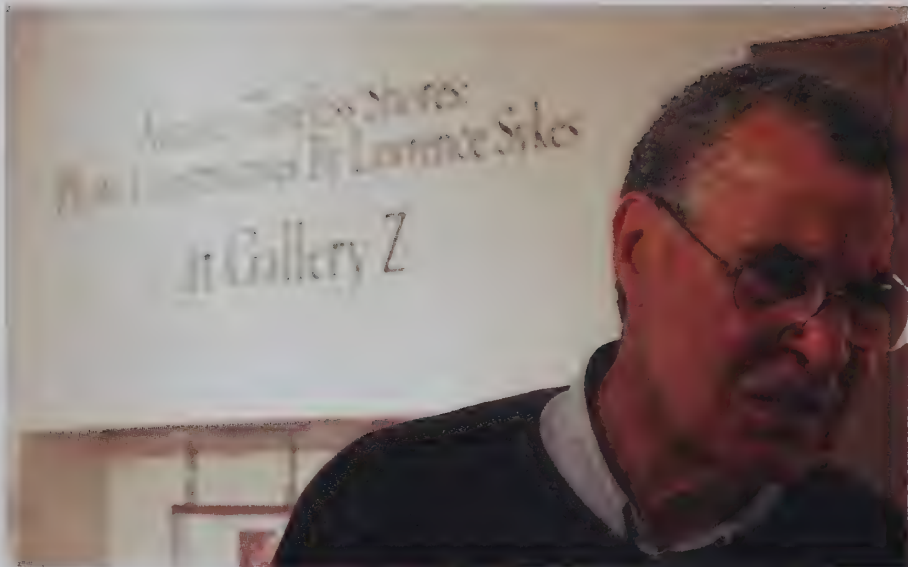
Walking with Larry Sykes, from Boston to Blantyre, Malawi, from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to Asmara, Eritrea, from Addis Ababa to New York City reveals that the greatest images are not made. They are joined. True words fly like birds through prison bars. Life is too short for illustration. Who needs creators, prophets and superpowers to number our bones? Who needs their language if we have our own? Cupping our hands, using tin cans, bowls and spoons, we put our lips to the source. We name our own rivers. Moonlit ferns between their green and gold tell the real time. Rooted in the city, thinking the eternal dance, tall as mountains, and spontaneous, we cut up maps and constellations not to illustrate or direct but to join the vision and voice consisting of many visions and voices in the past, present, and future of one people consisting of many peoples and one world: one, simple, graphic swirl repeated and repeated. Who needs more? It can contain volumes and, “I like it. I like it too much,” as he says remembering with delight the words of a profitable, old African trader. Join don’t make. Join don’t waste. Joined images love social justice and change for the better because they practice what they preach. Join and you find your voice. Join and you invent the wheel. Two heads are better than one. Two hearts together beat better than one. Joining image with image, word with word and person with person becomes its own transmission on a wavelength of universal reception, impulsive yet technical and leading, in one particular walk with Larry Sykes, to a place like Old Massawa, on the African coast of the Red Sea. We saw so many layers, and so many layers joined: Eritrean, Amharic, Turkish, Egyptian, Italian, English, arches and palms, peace and war, destruction and rebuilding, decoration and death, open and closed, surviving and condemned, overwhelming light and too much shadow, magnificent doors into ruins, loss and liberation, uniformed to naked, and children throughout – who knows best of all how to join – either accompanying us or playing their own games. A long, difficult but indomitable struggle of people who recognized that their true independence required joining each other kept this place alive against all odds. Walking these streets, we took turns following each other in a quest to join image to image and word to word, performing humble mediums to be worthy of what we saw and trying to join it – at least through art.

—**Dr. Charles Cantalupo**, Professor
Penn State University

About Lawrence Sykes:

Lawrence Sykes, born in 1931, is a retired professor of art at Rhode Island College where he developed the curriculum for the school's photography concentration. After receiving his undergraduate degree from Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland in 1955, he earned his masters at the Pratt Institute in New York in 1957.

In 1967, he participated in the Advanced Studies Workshop at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. Sykes went on to teach at New York University, the College of Art in Kumasi, Ghana, the Parsons School of Design West Africa Program and served as commissioner of the City of Providence, Rhode Island's 1% for Art Program.



Sykes talks about his newest body of work with Gallery Z staff. May 2009



In addition to his numerous commissions for the renowned Smithsonian National Zoological Park, the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, the Langston Hughes Commemorative Medallion for CCNY-CUNY in New York and The Heart Center Mural for the Roxbury Community Health Center in Massachusetts, he has made photographic contributions to dozens of books and academic journals.



Sykes' artwork has been collected and exhibited by museums throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Brazil and Malawi in Southeast Africa. Since his retirement from academia in 1995, Sykes has moved to Jamaica Plains, MA with his wife Barbara and continues to create with the same vigor and drive. The Photo-Constructives created by

acclaimed artist Lawrence Sykes for this exhibition are multi-layered photographic constructions that engage us with their different textures, variations in scale and blend of landscape and symbolism.

"The amazing Larry Sykes, a professor to many and a mentor to most, crosses the intellectual landscape through powerful images, haunting experiences and an iron clad sense for historic perspective.... with the wisdom of a cunning shaman, the artist will take you through a personalized journey with his constructions and conjur-graphs."

Angelo Marinosci Jr.,
Art Critic / Photographer

About Gallery Z

Located on Historic Federal Hill in Providence, Gallery Z provides the Rhode Island community with an eclectic collection of art by Armenian, local, national, and international artists from the 20th century to the present. Since its inception in 2001 by photographer Bérge Ara Zobian, Gallery Z has been spearheading efforts to connect the public with the growing arts community.

On the third Thursday of each month



Ancient Timeless Shores: May 6- May 30, 2009 at Gallery Z.

Gallery Z hosts an opening reception for each exhibition from 5 – 9 PM on Providence's Gallery Night.

On the last Thursday of each month, Gallery Z's *Art, Food & Wine Creating Awareness for a Cause* event is hosted at the gallery. For these events, Gallery Z partners with the participating Public Art Window organization and hosts a fundraising event to elevate public consciousness on their cause.

These events will feature cuisine

provided by different Providence restaurants and world-class hand selected wine provided by Mark Gasbarro of Gasbarro's Wines located at 361 Atwells Ave. on Historic Federal Hill.

His small, emotionally charged works are memorials to the African slave experience and testify to the richness (and necessity) of racial and cultural memory.

—**Bill Van Sieten**, Providence Journal, March 17, 1989



Lawrence Sykes at Gallery Z, 2006.

Sykes layers photographs of found objects into compositions that form a window on an evocative image, drawing the viewer into an implied narrative.

—**Christine Temin**, Boston Globe, February 9, 1992



Béрге Zobian and Larry Sykes, 2006.

A Special Thanks from the Gallery Director

To Larry — My very dear friend, artist, educator and mentor for over three decades. The truth, emotional power, education, technique, love, direction, opinion, history, critique and confidence you have guided me through has filled my life with compassion, honor and strength to pass the torch to others the devotion you have instilled in me.

—**Béрге Ara Zobian**, B.S , M.S.

Father of five beautiful children

Husband to Jayne Echmalian Zobian

Photographer of people and fashion

Director, Gallery Z

Co-chair, Gallery Night Providence

May 2009, Providence, Rhode Island



Ancient Timeless Shores:

Photo-Constructives by
Lawrence Sykes

May 6- May 30, 2009

Gallery Z
Providence Rhode Island USA
www.galleryzprov.com







Published by Gallery Z
259 Atwells Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island
USA
ISBN 978-0-9840692-0-0